

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE KIDS

September 2000

Lassen Children & Families Commission Newsletter

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The First Five Years of Life

Current research in brain development clearly indicates that the emotional, physical and intellectual environment that a child is exposed to in the early years of life has a profound impact on how the brain is organized. The experiences a child has with respect to parents and caregivers significantly influences how a child will function in school and later in life. Here is some information on early childhood development needs that are the basis for the Children and Families Initiative:

At birth, the brain is remarkably unfinished. The parts of the brain that handle thinking and remembering as well as emotional and social behavior are very underdeveloped.

In the early years, a child develops basic brain and physiological structures upon which later growth and learning are depending.

The brain operates on a "use it or lose it" principle. Emotionally and socially as well, the child develops many of the abilities upon which later social functioning is based.

The brain matures in the world, rather than the womb; thus young children are deeply affected by their experiences.

Their relationships with parents and other important caregivers; the sights, sounds, smells, and feelings they encounter; and the challenges they meet, affect the way a child's brain develops.

The early years of a child's life form the foundation for later development. Attention to young children is a powerful means of preventing later difficulties such as developmental delay and disturbances. Physical, mental, social and emotional development and learning are interrelated. Progress in one area affects progress in the others.

Thus promoting child development is not limited to the academic arena of numbers and letters. The following aspects of child development are considered important:

Physical development: Meeting children's basic needs for protection, nutrition and health care.

Social, emotional and mental development: Meeting children's basic human needs for affection, security, social participation and interaction with others as well as educational needs through intellectual stimulation, exploration, imitation, trial and error, discovery and active involvement in learning and experimentation within a safe and stimulating environment.

Further information on brain research can be found at the following web site:
(<http://www.zerotothree.org/brainworks/index.html>)

(reprinted from the following website: www.placer.ca.gov/children/cfamcomm.htm)

LASSEN
CHILDREN
& FAMILIES
COMMISSION



Promoting Oral Health in Young Children: A Prop 10 Opportunity



The Lassen Children & Families Commission is targeting childrens' dental health as their first priority. Working in collaboration with Plumas, Sierra and Modoc Counties Children and Families Commissions, supported by grant funds received from the California Children & Families Commission, a two day conference is being held, focusing on childrens' oral health. This four county regional planning summit is scheduled for October 23-24 at the Feather River Inn in Blairsden.

According to the September 2000 issue of "Field Lessons," a publication of the California Center for Health Improvement, tooth decay is almost entirely preventable, yet close to one-third of California preschoolers and two-thirds of elementary school children have had dental cavities. Dental decay, one of the most prevalent and untreated diseases of children, has been called a "neglected epidemic" in California.

Numerous barriers exist to improving the oral health of California's young children: inadequate public funding for dental services; non-fluoridated public drinking water; inadequate access to dental insurance; a shortage of dentists in some areas; reluctance to treat very young children; and inadequate knowledge of preventive measures on the part of parents and caregivers.

One of the most difficult problems facing California families—both insured and uninsured—is poor access to dental health ser-

vices. This is especially true in remote, rural areas. Few dentists practice in these areas and many are often unwilling to treat children under the age of four.

This regional summit begins by focusing on what we know about dental health in our region and clarifying values about childrens' oral health issues. Collectively we will look at our assets and resources, focusing on what we do have. Our evening panel of speakers includes participants with information on potential funding solutions along with those who have model programs currently addressing childrens' oral health in rural counties.

The keynote speaker for the second day is Francisco Ramos-Gomez, DDS, MPH, MS who will be speaking on how to approach childrens' oral health from many different angles. Dr. Ramos-Gomez will suggest ways to integrate this approach into both clinical and community-based settings, using dental and non-dental professionals.

The two day planning summit will culminate in the development of both local and regional plans of action that, when implemented, will impact the oral health of children. The generous support of the California Children & Families Commission in funding this planning opportunity has developed an infrastructure that can be utilized to further regional solutions regarding issues impacting the lives of pregnant women and children aged birth to five years.



California Children and Families (Prop 10) Commissions have an opportunity to advocate for increased funding for prevention and treatment services, and to support local implementation of proven techniques to improve young children's access to dental services.



LASSEN CHILDREN & FAMILIES COMMISSION MEETING

October 5, 2000 1:30 p.m.
Barry Creek Meeting Center
1345 Paul Bunyan Road
Susanville, CA

AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Presentation from Lassen County Alcohol & Drug PROMISES Program
4. Fiscal Report
 - Investment Practices
 - Leveraging Funds
5. Reimbursement Policy
6. Public Hearing on Audit Report and Annual Report
7. Updates
 - Childrens' Dental Health Services
 - Planning Summit
 - Big Valley Advisory Committee
8. Open Comment
9. Set next meeting date and agenda

Growing Up Healthy 5-6 months*

Dental Tips

- ◆ Look at your baby's teeth each day. Call your dentist if you see white, brown, or black spots.
- ◆ Start to offer your baby a cup. Use a training cup for plain water or fruit juice.
- ◆ Relieve teething pain by rubbing your baby's gums gently and/or offering a clean teething ring.
- ◆ Ask your doctor or dentist about fluoride for your baby's teeth. Store fluoride out of your baby's reach.

(*CHDP Child Health and Disability Prevention Program Pub. 254)

First Prop 10 Advisory Committee Formed



The initial members of the Big Valley Prop 10 Advisory Committee include: (pictured from left to right) , Greta Gordon, Shannon Gerig and littlest member Conner Gerig, Leesa Bricker, Brian Dahle in the back, Janet Kelly, Dan Bouse in the front, Dave Jones, and Commission chairperson Cheryl Smith. Working together, they will develop an action plan to apply for Prop 10 funds to address needs of children 0-5 and expectant mothers.

Remember!

Safe From The Start:

Reducing Children's Exposure to Violence
October 16—Holiday Inn, Redding
To register call (415) 616-3930 or go online at
www.safefromthestart.org

Lassen Children & Families Commission Salutes Big Valley Medical Center

"Teledentistry—the use of video-conferencing technology to examine and advise patients from a distance—is an innovative approach that has been used successfully in Lassen County's Big Valley Medical Center. With only one dentist on staff, young patients needing specialized care were sent to the nearest pediatric specialist nearly 90 miles away for their initial consultation. Today, thanks to teledentistry, the local dentist can examine the young patient himself, using a camera designed to take pictures inside the mouth. He then transmits the images in "real time" to the consulting pediatric dentist so the appropriate treatment plan can be devised. Necessary equipment—an intra-oral camera, a computer with a video card, and software—is estimated to cost \$5,000 to \$12,000." (reprinted from September 2000 issue of "Field Lessons")

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California Children and Families Commission News

Prop. 10 Contributes to Decrease in Teen Smoking*

Since Prop. 10 took effect in January 1999, youth smoking rates dropped 35 percent, and adult smoking prevalence inched downward to 18 percent, compared to 18.4 percent in 1998. The decline was announced by the California Department of Health Services in July.

"The news is direct evidence that comprehensive tobacco education efforts and Prop. 10's tobacco tax are working and have a tremendous impact on youth and smoking," said Rob Reiner, Chair of the State Commission. "The dramatic drop in tobacco consumption also means that fewer infants and young children in California are being exposed to the dangers of secondhand smoke."

Low-income individuals, particularly teens, tend to be extremely sensitive to price increases in tobacco; taxes and other price hikes affect the demand for cigarettes. "The precipitous drop is because prices were raised. Every study shows that the single best way to reduce teen smoking is to raise prices," Reiner said. "The real winners are California's children—as well as California voters who had the foresight to pass Prop. 10 in 1998."

(*reprinted from September 2000 edition of the California Commission Update Newsletter)

Coming Events

October

Thursday, 12

Regional Workshop Hosted by Plumas County
Children and Families Commission
"The Contract Awards Process"

Feather River Inn

Friday, 13

Teleconference

"Early Identification and Diagnosis of Special
Needs"

Speakers and Times TBA

December

Friday, 1

Workshop: Home Visiting and Family Support
Lessons Learned from San Mateo County's
Prenatal to Three Initiative
San Francisco Airport Marriott

For reservations for all events contact
The Prop 10 TA Center 1-877-827-7671